

What's the Buzz About Bees?

When we think about bees, a lot of us think about the black and yellow striped honeybees and bumblebees that we see on cereal boxes and in cartoons. Many of us do not realize that there are over 4,000 bee species in North America that come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Even more surprising may be the fact that 90 percent of these bees are solitary and do not live in hives. 30-40 percent of bees are actually cavity nesting bees found in logs and stumps such as Leaf Cutter, Mason, and Carpenter bees. Although bees are capable of creating or discovering their own domestic dwellings, recent trends show that they could use our help.

We have seen a rapid decline in the number of pollinators over recent years and bees are at the forefront of this declination. Studies and evaluations have been done on approximately 1,400 out of the over 4,000 bee species in North America, and of these 1,400 species more than half are in decline and approximately one quarter of them are at risk of becoming extinct. There is not just one culprit for the recently declining numbers, but in fact many things have been contributing to the death of bees and the deterioration of bee colonies: pesticides, parasites, Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), poor nutrition, and climate change all play a role. With that being said, all hope is not lost. On average, about 70 percent of plants depend on pollinators for fertilization and about one third of everything we eat is grown with their help. We clearly benefit from this relationship, therefore it's important that we provide and support habitats for their continued survival. There are many things that we can do to help aid in the fight for bee population growth: planting native flowers and avoiding pesticides such as neonicotinoids are good ways to start.

Another cost efficient method is creating habitats such as Bee Blocks for some of these cavity nesting bees. A basic Bee Block can be constructed from timber or wood often found on a USACE project's property using a hand drill, and a chain saw. You are welcome to look up more information about Bee Blocks at your leisure and get as creative with them as you'd like.



US Army Corps
of Engineers
New England District

Easy Way to Make Pollinator Habitat

The Bee Block

1. Search for stumps, logs, or scrap wood.



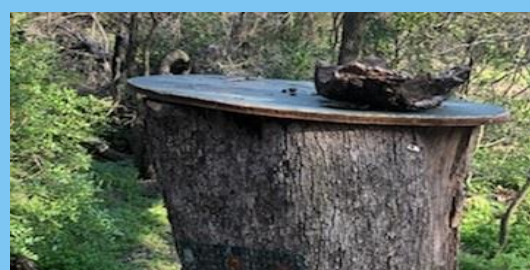
2. Utilize a saw to shape the wood as you see fit.



3. Drill multiple 4-10 mm. holes, 4-6 inches deep, about 2-4 ft. off the ground.



4. Place a cover on top of the structure to prevent any flooding/washouts.



5. Monitor the holes for bee activity.



6. Enjoy your new pollinator habitat!

